

162 80-89	0.8	1.2	1.0
90-99	0.0	0.1	0.1

- 163 The Estonian birth rate has never been high.
 165 The 1930-34 average was 16.8 per mille. At the same time, the death rate averaged 14.9 per mille, leaving a natural increase of 1.9 per mille. This median death rate was higher than the average among other people with the same birth rate. In earlier years (in the last decade of the nineteenth century, for example) the birth rate of the Estonians has been considerably higher--

[563] 29.9 per mille. The birth rate among the Russian minority was 7 to 8 per cent higher than that for the Estonian population, but the Estonian German and Jewish populations had higher death rates than birth rates.

165 Before Estonian independence the infant

3: Indiana U. S-4, 5 1955 RG4 Estonia RG4
Vepses

161 the Isaijeva Vepsians (295) were not included. Finnish scholars considered the Vepsians' number by the end of the czarist regime to be around 25,000, which, however, may be less than their actual number.

The increase of the Vepsians in the 50-year period from 1848 to 1897 was 63.66 per cent, which is less than the average increase of the whole population of this area. Especially low was the increase in the Novgorod government -- 29.58 per cent. The increase of the Vepsians in the following 30 years, from 1897 to 1926, was even lower than before -- 28.2 per cent.

What is the reason for this slow increase of the Vepsians?

Let us examine first their natural increase. It has been widely noticed that the Vepsian families have many children. We have exact data from one community in North Vepse, [163] Sheltozero, which would confirm this statement. [165] In the years 1923 to 1926 the birth-rate in Sheltozero per year was 53.4, while the death-rate for the same period was 35.4. The natural increase in this community thus was 18, which was higher than the average increase of 16 in Karelia.

177 If, despite this considerable natural increase, the number of Vepsians does not show an adequate increase, then the reason for this is to be sought in the russification process. Russification is first of all noticeable in isolated villages, the population of which is

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over 100 Polish schools. The survival of even a small Polish minority *Ba.* in Lithuania will make it possible for Polish nationalists to maintain *563* their traditional claim on the city of Vilna.

The number of Jews in the Baltic States was also drastically reduced, but in their case the Germans, not the Soviet Government, were chiefly responsible. Many thousands of Baltic Jews were exterminated by the Germans because the Soviet authorities had failed to evacuate them in time.

From a narrow-minded, nationalistic point of view the Baltic peoples might perhaps have welcomed at one stage the disappearance of national minorities, which until 1939 had lived in their midst. In the event they discovered that the departure of Swedes, Poles, Germans and Jews was hardly to their advantage since it only made room for Russian colonists.

SOVIET ESTONIA

Of the three Baltic peoples the Estonians are in the greatest danger of *Ba.* falling victim to the Russian advance. This is due mainly to the fact that *163* the Estonians are fewer in number than either Latvians or Lithuanians. *Es.* Their numerical inferiority is aggravated by the fact that their natural *[63] •* increase is lower than that of the majority of Western European peoples. In 1938 the rate of natural increase in Estonia was 1.7 per 1,000 inhabitants, which was the lowest of all European countries with the exception of France, and, on account of the Civil War, Spain. In 1940 the situation in Estonia deteriorated to such an extent that a decline of 0.6 per 1,000 was recorded.

In Latvia the position in regard to the population increase is slightly better than in Estonia, its index being at 4.9 in 1938, and 3.7 in 1940. Both Estonians and Latvians are peoples with a Western European birth-rate living in Eastern Europe and they will undoubtedly suffer from all the inconveniences inherent in such an anomaly, in the first place from the pressure exercised by the population of the Soviet Russian Empire whose rate of increase was 17.8 in 1938.

The Russian pressure will become particularly active and real in the case of Estonia because of the close proximity of that country to Leningrad. Leningrad, with a population of over 3,000,000, must inevitably extend its grip over the whole of Estonia with its 1,000,000 inhabitants, and Estonia will then be degraded to a kind of economic annexe of the second largest Soviet city. The construction of a gas pipe-line linking the gas-works of Kokhtla-Järve in Eastern Estonia with Leningrad is an indication that such a development is well under way. Kokhtla-Järve, a new Estonian town which was built during the first post-war Five-Year *Es.* Plan, is the 'centre of the Estonian Donbass' and is expected to become *[316]* the largest shale-producing centre in the U.S.S.R.

The development of the new shale mines, shale-refining plants, electric